United Nations A/66/198

General Assembly

Distr.: General
19 August 2011

Original: English

Sixty-sixth session

Request for the inclusion of a supplementary item in the agenda of the sixty-sixth session

Observer status for the International Conference of Asian Political Parties in the General Assembly

Letter dated 10 August 2011 from the Permanent Representatives of Cambodia, Japan, Nepal, the Philippines, the Republic of Korea and Viet Nam to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

We, the undersigned, have the honour to request, in accordance with rule 14 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, the inclusion in the agenda of the sixty-sixth session of the General Assembly of a supplementary item entitled "Observer status for the International Conference of Asian Political Parties in the General Assembly".

The International Conference of Asian Political Parties was launched in Manila, in September 2000, to build bridges of political cooperation and to establish networks of mutual benefit among mainstream political parties in Asia, both ruling and in opposition. Over its first decade, the International Conference of Asian Political Parties has grown steadily in both membership and influence. As of May 2011, membership has reached more than 340 eligible political parties in 52 States and 1 territory in Asia. After establishing fraternal linkages and cooperation with the Permanent Conference of Political Parties in Latin America and the Caribbean, in 2008, the International Conference of Asian Political Parties has also been undertaking efforts to reach out to the political parties in other continents, including in particular Africa.

So far the International Conference of Asian Political Parties has held six general assemblies — in Manila (2000), Bangkok (2002), Beijing (2004), Seoul (2006), Astana (2009) and Phnom Penh (2010). These assemblies have brought together the Asian continent's most prominent political leaders to search for ways of coexisting in a more peaceful, more democratic and more prosperous Asia. Its Standing Committee — made up of 18 leading political parties in 18 States — has met at least twice a year since 2004. The International Conference of Asian Political Parties has also organized special conferences on key continental issues since 2008 —

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such as those of minimizing political corruption (Seoul, 2008), strengthening State capacity (Kathmandu, 2009), easing mass poverty (Kunming, 2010) and dealing with natural disasters (Kuala Lumpur, 2011).

From its inception, the International Conference of Asian Political Parties has been a staunch supporter of the United Nations and its activities. The first paragraph of the preamble to the organization's Charter, adopted in September 2006, declares the unequivocal commitment of the International Conference of Asian Political Parties to the principles and objectives of the Charter of the United Nations. Representatives of the political parties that took part in the sixth general assembly in Phnom Penh in December 2010 unanimously adopted a declaration endorsing the bid for observer status in the General Assembly of the United Nations. The International Conference of Asian Political Parties is also coordinating with the joint initiatives of Governments of other States Members of the United Nations towards the same objective.

We believe that the International Conference of Asian Political Parties can play a major role in forging cooperation between the United Nations and the political parties of Asia, and those of Latin America and Africa in the future, the three continents of the emerging democracies, by aggregating and channelling to the United Nations system the views of the peoples in all their diversity, as expressed in political debates and discussions at all dimensions, local, national and continental, promoting people's awareness, approval and support of international agreements reached at the United Nations, and building international consensus on United Nations action to meet key global challenges. In addition, the International Conference of Asian Political Parties can provide support for political parties in the emerging democracies and increase their capacity to carry out at the local and national level their law-making and oversight functions on matters subject to international cooperation at the United Nations.

Attached are an explanatory memorandum (annex I) and a draft resolution regarding the item (annex II).

We have the honour to request that the present letter and its annexes be circulated as a document of the General Assembly.

(*Signed*) Kosal **Sea**
Permanent Representative of the Kingdom of Cambodia
to the United Nations

(*Signed*) Tsuneo **Nishida**
Permanent Representative of Japan to the United Nations

(*Signed*) Gyan Chandra **Acharya**
Permanent Representative of the Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal
to the United Nations

(*Signed*) Libran N. **Cabactulan**
Permanent Representative of the Republic of the Philippines to the United Nations

(*Signed*) **Kim** Sook
Permanent Representative of the Republic of Korea to the United Nations

(*Signed*) **Le** Hoai Trung
Permanent Representative of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam
to the United Nations

Annex I

Explanatory memorandum

Historical background

The International Conference of Asian Political Parties (ICAPP) was launched by the leaders of 46 political parties of Asia in Manila in September 2000, to build bridges of political cooperation and to establish networks of mutual benefit among mainstream political parties in Asia, both ruling and in opposition. Over its first decade, ICAPP has grown steadily in both membership and influence. As at the end of May 2011, its membership has reached more than 340 eligible political parties in 52 States and 1 territory in Asia.

So far, six general assemblies of ICAPP have been successfully held, in Manila in 2000, Bangkok in 2002, Beijing in 2004, Seoul in 2006, Astana in 2009 and Phnom Penh in 2010, and they have brought together political leaders in the region to exchange opinions and communicate with each other, and helped to strengthen unity among Asian States and propel Asia along the road towards stability and prosperity.

The ICAPP Standing Committee, made up of 18 leading political parties in 18 States, has met at least twice a year since 2004. ICAPP has also been annually organizing special conferences on key continental issues since May 2008 — such as those on minimizing political corruption, strengthening State capacity, alleviating mass poverty and effectively handling natural disasters.

Purpose

Article 1 of the ICAPP Charter, adopted at the fourth general assembly in September 2006, stipulates the objectives of ICAPP as follows:

(a) To promote exchanges and cooperation between political parties with various ideologies in Asia;

(b) To enhance mutual understanding and trust among the peoples and countries in the region;

(c) To promote regional cooperation through the unique role and channel of political parties;

(d) To create an environment for sustained peace and shared prosperity in the region.

Organizational structure

Membership

Article 2 of the ICAPP Charter stipulates that ICAPP "shall be open to all political parties in Asia with democratically elected members in the parliaments of their respective countries, which are Member States of the United Nations". At the 5th meeting of the Standing Committee in June 2006, it was agreed to extend invitations to political parties in the Palestinian National Authority in an effort to render ICAPP activities more inclusive and representative of the diversities existing in the region. At the 8th meeting of the Standing Committee in November 2008, it was further agreed to apply two criteria to the political parties in Asia to be eligible

for invitation to the future ICAPP activities: (1) political parties which have more than 1 per cent of elected seats in their parliaments; (2) political parties which have won more than 1 per cent of popular votes in their latest parliamentary elections, as certified and recognized by their national election commissions.

According to these criteria, there are 341 political parties in 52 States and 1 territory in Asia that are eligible to participate in ICAPP activities as at the end of May 2011.

General assembly

According to article 4 of the ICAPP Charter, a general assembly is held once every two years on a rotational basis among the members, unless otherwise decided by the Standing Committee. In principle, it is held for three working days during the latter half of the year, and is composed of an opening session, plenary session and thematic committee meetings, special workshops on specific topics as approved by the Standing Committee and a closing session.

Standing Committee

According to articles 9 and 10 of the ICAPP Charter, a Standing Committee, composed of the representatives of 18 members from an equal number of countries, was established. The members of the Standing Committee serve for two years from the end of a general assembly until the end of the following general assembly. The Standing Committee makes decisions and lays out the procedures on issues regarding the organization of the ICAPP meetings, including the general assemblies and special conferences, as well as other issues regarding other ICAPP activities and programmes.

Currently, the Standing Committee is composed of the representatives of the 18 leading political parties from 18 States representing different subregions of Asia, namely, Central Asia, North-East Asia, South Asia, South-East Asia, West Asia and Oceania, and has been meeting more than twice a year since 2004.

Secretariat

The permanent secretariat of ICAPP was established in Seoul by a decision unanimously taken at the 10th meeting of the Standing Committee in March 2009, and as endorsed at the fifth general assembly in September 2009.

In accordance with article 12 of the ICAPP Charter, the secretariat executes such functions, among others, as (1) maintaining and updating the list of political parties and the official website; (2) providing necessary information and assistance to the ICAPP members; and (3) establishing contacts and promoting cooperation with other international or regional organizations.

Financing

Article 8 of the ICAPP Charter stipulates that the political parties hosting the general assembly shall bear the primary expenses of the general assemblies. The primary expenses include logistical arrangements, that is, conference facilities, domestic transportation and the like. The primary expenses shall not include, inter alia, international transportation to and from the location of the general assembly. For the purposes of holding the general assembly, the political parties hosting the

general assemblies may seek voluntary contributions from members of ICAPP and other organizations.

The ICAPP activities, namely the general assemblies, Standing Committee meetings and special conferences, are funded in principle by the political parties that host such events, which usually cover the costs of organizing conferences and minimum local accommodation for a limited number of representatives of political parties participating in the events.

At the 10th meeting of the Standing Committee in March 2009, it was agreed that the budget and personnel to implement the functions of the ICAPP secretariat shall be initially provided by the host country. It was further agreed that the Standing Committee will continue to discuss issues relating to the budget and personnel of the secretariat. Since 2010, the Korea Foundation in Seoul has provided funds to support a part of the secretariat activities. Other administrative budgets, including office maintenance and personnel costs, are covered by private donations.

Activities

General assemblies

So far, six ICAPP general assemblies have been held. The first was held in Manila in September 2000 with representatives of 46 political parties from 26 countries, the second in Bangkok in November 2002 with 77 parties from 35 countries, the third in Beijing in September 2004 with 81 parties from 35 countries, the fourth in Seoul in September 2006 with 92 parties from 36 countries, the fifth in Astana in September 2009 with 63 parties from 33 countries, and the sixth in Phnom Penh in December 2010 with 90 parties from 36 countries.

These assemblies have brought together the Asian continent's most prominent political leaders to search for ways of coexisting in a more peaceful, more democratic and more prosperous Asia.

Special conferences

Special conferences and workshops have also been convened for the ICAPP members on key challenges that the region is facing, such as prevention of political corruption, strengthening State capacity, alleviation of poverty and dealing with natural disasters. ICAPP is preparing to host another special conference on the issues relating to poverty alleviation in China in September 2011.

Relations with other organizations

Recently, ICAPP has been trying to reach out to other regions in the world. The first joint session with the Permanent Conference of Political Parties in Latin America and the Caribbean was successfully held in Buenos Aires in July 2009. After establishing fraternal linkages and cooperation with the Permanent Conference of Political Parties of Latin America and the Caribbean, ICAPP has been undertaking efforts to reach out to the political parties in Africa, in coordination with the Permanent Conference of Political Parties of Latin America and the Caribbean, with a view to organizing the first trilateral meeting of political parties in Asia, Africa and Latin America in the near future.

In this regard, ICAPP will play a key and continuing role not only in Asia's inevitable movement to build an Asian community but also in the global quest for a more peaceful and prosperous world.

Character of the International Conference of Asian Political Parties

Although ICAPP is not an intergovernmental organization per se, the following points with regard to its legal status should be taken into consideration by the States Members of the United Nations:

(a) ICAPP is unique in nature in that it is open to all political parties regardless of their political orientation;

(b) The political parties participating in ICAPP activities are either responsible for forming the Governments in their respective countries and making most of their policies, or eligible to form future Governments depending on the results of elections;

(c) ICAPP has also been channelling to the United Nations system the results of its political debates at all levels, local, national and continental, like submitting the Kunming Declaration on Poverty Alleviation, which was adopted at the special ICAPP conference in Kunming in July 2010, in time for the High-level Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly on the Millennium Development Goals held two months later;

(d) In addition, in recent years, ICAPP has been in close cooperation with political parties in other regions, namely, Latin America and Africa, with a view to forming a global forum of political parties and, in the case of Latin America, ICAPP and the Permanent Conference of Political Parties in Latin America and the Caribbean have been holding annual joint sessions to coordinate their activities to promote United Nations objectives.

Reasons for seeking observer status for the International Conference of Asian Political Parties

From its inception, ICAPP has been a staunch supporter of the United Nations and its activities. The first paragraph of the preamble to the ICAPP Charter, adopted in September 2006, declares the unequivocal commitment of ICAPP to the principles and objectives of the Charter of the United Nations. Representatives of the political parties that took part in the sixth general assembly in Phnom Penh in December 2010 unanimously adopted a declaration that endorsed the ICAPP bid for observer status in the General Assembly of the United Nations.

ICAPP will play a key and continuing role not only in Asia's inevitable movement to build an Asian community but also in the global quest for a more peaceful and prosperous world.

ICAPP can also play a major role in forging cooperation between the United Nations and the political parties not only of Asia but also of Latin America and Africa — the three continents of the emerging democracies — in the following areas:

(a) Aggregating and channelling to the United Nations system the views of our peoples in all their diversity, as expressed in political debates and discussions at all dimensions, local, national and continental;

(b) Promoting ordinary people's awareness, approval and support of international agreements reached at the United Nations and through United Nations programmes;

(c) Building international consensus on United Nations action to meet key global challenges;

(d) Providing support for political parties in the emerging democracies — to increase their capacity to carry out at the local and national level their law-making and oversight functions on matters subject to international cooperation at the United Nations.

In addition, the Secretary-General of the United Nations has been sending video messages to all major programmes of ICAPP, including the opening sessions of the fifth and sixth general assemblies, held in Astana and Phnom Penh, and the ICAPP special conference on poverty alleviation held in Kunming, and has provided valuable contributions and guidance to deliberations on the main themes of the conferences.

More detailed information on ICAPP, including the address of the secretariat, the officers and the members of the Standing Committees, can be found on its website, at www.theicapp.org.

Annex II

Draft resolution

Observer status for the International Conference of Asian Political Parties in the General Assembly

The General Assembly,

Wishing to promote cooperation between the United Nations and the International Conference of Asian Political Parties,

1. *Decides* to invite the International Conference of Asian Political Parties to participate in the sessions and the work of the General Assembly in the capacity of observer;

2. *Requests* the Secretary-General to take the necessary action to implement the present resolution.